

Message Text

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E.O. 11652:

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SUBJECT: COMMUNIST MISTREATMENT OF CIVILIANS CAPTURED DURING
OFFENSIVE LAST SUMMER

1. WE BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT WILL WANT TO MAKE THE REPORT THAT FOLLOWS AVAILABLE TO SELECTED MEDIA OUTLETS, TO THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, AND TO OTHER INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. THIS REPORT, WHICH HAS JUST BECOME AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY, IS BASED ON THE ACCOUNTS OF GVN CITIZENS WHO WERE CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS DURING LAST SUMMER'S OFFENSIVE IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE AND HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO ESCAPE. IT HAS BEEN CHECKED AGAINST OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION AND IS BELIEVED ACCURATE. THE DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT MANY OF THE CAPTURED CIVILIANS WERE IMPRESSED INTO COMMUNIST MILITARY UNITS.

2. BEGIN TEXT. IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 1974 ROUGHLY 5,000 GVN CIVILIANS CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS IN LOC BINH, LOC VINH, AND LOC NINH VILLAGES, THUONG DUC DISTRICT, QUANG NAM PROVINCE, WERE TAKEN WEST TO THE THANH MY AREA OF THUONG DUC DISTRICT. THESE CIVILIANS WERE CLASSIFIED BY COMMUNIST SECURITY CADRE AND THEN DISPATCHED TO RESETTLEMENT OR DETENTION AREAS, DEPENDING UPON THE CLASSIFICATION ASSIGNED. FAMILIES WITH NO UNCLASSIFIED

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IMMEDIATE RELATIVES WORKING FOR THE GVN WERE CLASSIFIED AS

"TYPE A," WHILE FAMILIES WITH IMMEDIATE RELATIVES WORKING FOR THE GVN WERE CLASSIFIED AS "TYPE B." PERSONNEL IN THE "TYPE B" CATEGORY WERE SENT TO THE NEARBY BEN AREA, WHILE THOSE IN THE "TYPE A" CATEGORY WERE RESETTLED IN THE THNAH MY AREA. MOST OF THE 5,000 CIVILIANS WERE WOMEN AND CHILDREN, OR MEN TOO OLD TO BE DRAFTED FOR MILITARY SERVICE.

3. ALTHOUGH COMMUNIST CADRE PROMISED THE GVN CIVILIANS RESETTLED IN THE THANH MY AREA SUFFICIENT FOOD TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR NEEDS FOR THREE MONTHS, AN INSUFFICIENT AMOUNT OF FOOD WAS PROVIDED DURING THE FIRST MONTH AND NO FOOD WAS PROVIDED THEREAFTER. DURING THE PERIOD WHEN FOOD WAS PROVIDED, PERSONS 14 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE RECEIVED 600 GRAMS OF RICE PER DAY, THOSE FROM AGES FIVE TO 13 RECEIVED ONLY 300 GRAMS PER DAY, AND THOSE UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE RECEIVED ONLY 150 GRAMS PER DAY. A SMALL AMOUNT OF SALT WAS ALSO PROVIDED BUT NO OTHER FOOD ITEMS WERE DISTRIBUTED. AFTER THE FIRST MONTH COMMUNIST CADRE ANNOUNCED THAT RICE COULD NO LONGER BE PROVIDED BECAUSE THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH TO SUPPLY BOTH NVA COMBAT UNITS AND CIVILIANS. INSTEAD, COMMUNIST CADRE ALLOWED ONE MEMBER FROM EACH FAMILY TO RETURN TO HIS NATIVE VILLAGE AND GATHER FOOD FROM HIS HOME AND TO HARVEST WHATEVER MIGHT BE LEFT OF THE RICE CROP WHICH HAD BEEN PLANTED ON LAND THE FAMILY HAD TILLED. AND UNSPECIFIED BUT INADEQUATE AMOUNT OF FOOD WAS OBTAINED IN THIS MANNER. NO BLANKETS, MOSQUITO NETS, MEDICINE, OR OTHER MATERIALS WERE PROVIDED TO THE CIVILIANS, WHO HAD TO CONSTRUCT THEIR OWN SHELTERS. SANITATION CONDITIONS WERE VERY BAD IN THE RESETTLEMENT AREA. DURING THE PERIOD EARLY SEPTEMBER TO MID-OCTOBER AT LEAST 120 RESETTLED PERSONS IN THE THANH MY AREA, AMONG THEM ABOUT 100 CHILDREN UNDER 14, DIED OF VARIOUS DISEASES, INCLUDING MALARIA AND DYSENTERY. ABOUT FIVE ELDERS COMMITTED SUICIDE IN OCTOBER BY JUMPING INTO THE RAIN-SWOLLEN CAI RIVER, AFTER HAVING BEEN TOLD THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO FORAGE FOR FOOD IN THEIR NATIVE VILLAGE TO REPLACE THE DISCONTINUED RATIONS FOR THEIR FAMILIES.

4. FROM 18 AUGUST TO 2 NOVEMBER POLITICAL AND MILITARY TRAINING WAS CONDUCTED AT A TRAINING FACILITY IN THE THANH MY AREA OF THUONG DUC DISTRICT FOR 71 GVN CIVILIANS FROM THE AGES OF ABOUT 14 TO 23 WHO HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THUONG DUC DISTRICT. AFTER COMPLETION OF TRAINING, 13 OF THEM WERE ASSIGNED TO A COMMUNIST INFANTRY BATTALION, 15 TO ANOTHER INFANTRY BATTALION, 23 TO A COMMUNIST LOCAL FORCES UNIT, AND 20 FEMALES WERE ASSIGNED TO SUPPORT ELEMENTS OF UNSPECIFIED COMMUNIST UNITS. IN LATE OCTOBER A SECOND TRAINING COURSE WAS CONVENED FOR 75 GVN YOUTHS, INCLUDING 25 FEMALES, WHO WERE CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS IN DAI LOC DISTRICT, QUANG NAM PROVINCE, IN JULY AND AUGUST.

5. FROM 29 JULY TO 8 AUGUST ABOUT 400 GVN MALES, INCLUDING HAMLET AND VILLAGE CADRE, SUSPECTED PEOPLE'S SELF-DEFENSE FORCE (PSDF) MEMBERS, AND MEMBERS OF GVN POLITICAL PARTIES, CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS IN THUONG DUC DISTRICT, WERE SENT TO A DETENTION FACILITY SOMEWHERE IN THUONG DUC DISTRICT. AFTER INTERROGATION AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION SOME OF THE DETAINEES WERE RELEASED FROM THE FACILITY TO ATTEND MILITARY TRAINING COURSES, UPON COMPLETION OF WHICH THEY WERE TO BE ASSIGNED TO COMMUNIST MILITARY UNITS. END TEXT.
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